

Equality Impact Assessment Report completed 25/11/21 and reviewed 12/1/22 (Reviewed by EDI Manager, Jenni Salkeld, and signed off by Assistant Chief Executive, Rachelle Kipling on 5/2/22)

Assessment conducted by Tracey Brittain, Temporary Commissioner's Officer for Victims and Sarah Wilson, Commissioner's Officer for Consultation and Engagement at the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland (OPCC).

This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken to review the specific needs of victims of domestic abuse from ethnically diverse communities including, whether the needs of these victims in Cleveland are being met by the organisations currently available.

This assessment was started on 3rd November 2021 and contains preliminary findings and themes emerging from contact with stakeholder organisations delivering domestic abuse and VAWG services. It further includes consultation with a range of organisations and community services from or serving ethnically diverse communities.

Ensuring quality in an EIA requires continuous review, as such this EIA is a working document that will be reviewed every 12 months as a minimum. This will ensure the dynamic changes occurring within local communities are considered within future needs assessment, commissioning and procurement decisions. It is also important to note that there are other reviews taking place in relation to domestic abuse and that these reviews will incorporate the needs of groups with protected characteristics and can feed into EIA reviews.

Scope

Sources

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner has published a report on the needs of migrant victims of DA which highlights a need for specialist agencies for BAME victims.

<https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Safety-Before-Status-Report-2021.pdf>

'We are Invisible' the experiences of women in the criminal justice system highlights the prevalence of domestic abuse in BAME communities and the cultural ignorance which can be faced when accessing mainstream services

https://mcusercontent.com/3f41f774aebc77c4a2536aa53/files/b4a68ede-8fd2-451c-a923-63e1f7bb3b72/We_are_Invisible_July_2020_1_.pdf

Domestic Abuse Commissioners Webinar 9th December 2021 presentation on the importance of 'by and for' services delivered by Angelou Centre which referred to two documents available from [lmkaan](#) and highlighted the need for commissioning practice to take account of the specific experience, culture and

religious context of minoritised communities, an awareness of power dynamics and tokenism within models of engagement and co-production with ethnically diverse communities and the additional impact of intersectionality for these communities within needs assessment.

Imkaan Policy Paper:

[shelter uk case study imkaan.pdf \(endvawnow.org\)](#)

Violence Against Women and Girls Services- Supporting Local Commissioning

[VAWG commissioning toolkit \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Numbers

The recent OPCC Victim Services demographic report submitted to Ministry of Justice covering the period April 1st to September 30th 2021 provides a six-month snapshot of the ethnicity profile of victims engaging with generic victim services and specialist sexual violence and domestic abuse provision across Cleveland currently commissioned by the OPCC for Cleveland.

Ethic Group	Numbers
White (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, any other White background)	4,822
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background)	31
Asian / Asian British (including Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and any other Asian background)	149
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	69
Other Ethnic Group (including Arab and any other ethnic group)	24
Not stated	1,078

Consultation

Two distinct approaches were taken to this consultation. 1. Consultation with key stakeholders sought to understand whether the needs of victims from ethnically diverse communities were being met within mainstream services. 2. Consultation with services from or for ethnically diverse communities sought to understand the needs of individuals from ethnically diverse communities in relation to domestic abuse and VAWG provision.

Consultation took place with the following whilst some respondents requested they remain anonymous:

Key stakeholder organisations:

- Safer Communities SARC and VCAS
- Arch
- My Sister's Place
- Harbour
- Foundation
- Eva
- A Way Out
- NACRO Switch
- Halo

Ethnically diverse organisations and wider community services for groups from ethnically diverse communities:

- Women Today
- Purple Rose
- Hindu Multi-cultural Centre
- Open Door North East
- Amal Project
- Middlesbrough Council
- North East Migration Partnership
- Mears – asylum seeker housing providers
- Nur Fitness
- Ashiana
- Chinese Association
- Arrival Practice (GP practice for RAS)
- Link Project CiC
- Tees Valley Women's Centre
- Catalyst
- Hartlepool Council

Findings and Emerging Themes

Stakeholder organisations:

Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

Consideration of the specific diversity and inclusion of those from ethnically diverse communities is embedded within policies, processes and practice. All these services have robust EDI policies which are embedded into organisational infrastructure (board membership, recruitment of staff and volunteers), planning, decision-making and operational procedures.

Needs Assessment Practice

All organisations said they have robust person-centred needs assessment processes for identifying specific needs of victims from ethnically diverse communities. In some organisations there were additional assessment questions around cultural and faith needs. Where needs are identified there were responses to meet those needs either, within organisational practices or through referral to other organisations or services. One organisation has specifically employed an EDI lead to ensure needs are adequately assessed and responded to, and to upskill and support staff to operate responsively to EDI issues.

Language and Translation

All commissioned DA services provide access to appropriate translation services. All organisations identified the need to provide appropriate translation and interpretation services as part of their service offer, including accessible information and literature and engagement in person. Two organisations have installed translation software onto their websites to assist with access. Some organisations had formal arrangements with their local authorities regarding the provision of commissioned translation and interpreter services. Some organisations utilised partnership arrangements with other services from and for ethnically diverse communities to provide translation and interpretation provision and support.

Workforce Training and Development

All organisations stated they ensured workforce development and performance management included specific considerations re ethnically diverse communities to enhance cultural competency. They all mentioned the same local organisation that provides specific training in relation to domestic abuse, honour based violence and FGM in ethnically diverse communities. Additionally, some noted more recent awareness of and engagement with a number of other services serving ethnically diverse communities that were able to provide training, advice and support and referrals around a wider range of ethnically diverse communities and issues including, migrants and asylum seekers, black African communities and groups representing other nationalities. There was acknowledgement of the specific expertise and value provided by these organisations and groups, and the role they contribute to supporting mainstream organisations with developing cultural competency within the workforce, its' development, planning and practice.

User Voice and Choice

All stakeholder organisations identified that there were additional barriers to engagement with victims from ethnically diverse communities with specialist services and that victims should have more choice about support services. Some victims were referred on to specific 'by and for' services either completely or in partnership with mainstream services. Many victims do not want support or would rather remain anonymous to specific services serving ethnically diverse communities. All services stated that they operate user voice forums and encourage representation from victims with protected characteristics.

Diversity within minority ethnic population

It was repeatedly acknowledged that there is a wide range of diversity within the minority ethnic population and that whilst there are a range of specific support services, the ethnic minority population is not a homogenous group or population. There are services in Cleveland that are perceived to focus upon particular ethnic groups including, Black African, Asian/muslim and migrant populations. It was acknowledged that there are perceptions and assumptions held by all individuals about people and groups that are, or are perceived to be different. There was acknowledgment that there are gaps in specific provision and reach into a wide range of ethnically diverse communities.

Ethnically diverse services:

Cultural Dynamics

A range of services identified that there is a lack of understanding in mainstream services regarding a range of issues experienced by ethnically diverse communities regarding specific cultural issues such as the dynamics between different generations within ethnically diverse communities or the dynamics of traditional gender roles, attitudes within families and between families and different communities.

Shame, Stigma and Concepts of Honour

It was consistently identified that many ethnically diverse communities perceive domestic abuse as a private matter. Many do not perceive it as a crime and there are huge pressures on victims to remain silent. The issue of shame and stigma and concepts of honour contribute to the reluctance of victims to seek help. During our consultation with ethnically diverse groups we were told repeatedly that, where victims do desire support there is concern around proximity to their local communities and networks, their anonymity and fears around the confidentiality of information held by services that represent ethnically diverse communities.

Choice

There was a mixture of views from victims from ethnically diverse communities, some preferring 'by and for' services, and others preferring mainstream services; where support comes from also varied depending on the nature of that support. For example, some victims said they preferred a mainstream specialist service for some issues but prefer a more culturally relevant group for other types of support during the recovery journey. We heard repeatedly that victims want more choice, and that many victims desired access to an ethnically representative worker within mainstream services or for staff in mainstream services to be upskilled in cultural capability and competency. We also heard that many victims from ethnically diverse communities desired complete disassociation from services and any association, direct or indirect with communities and networks that represented their own communities.

Language and interpretation services

There are concerns around how interpreters are identified and their potential connection to minority communities. Many individuals from ethnically diverse communities were concerned about confidentiality and anonymity.

Diversity within ethnically diverse populations

There is a need to understand that minority communities includes numerous different communities with diverse cultural identities, needs and requirements for support that is responsive to that diversity. It was consistently acknowledged that a 'one size fits all' is not an approach that is responsive to victims from ethnically diverse communities whether that be from mainstream or 'by and for' services. It was acknowledged that whilst some services and groups may be inclusive to victims of all diversities these can be perceived to represent specific groups and minorities within the wider ethnic population.

Migrants, asylum seekers, trafficked and victims of modern day slavery

It was repeatedly acknowledged that there is a need for more awareness and understanding of the additional issues, fears, trauma and impacts of domestic and sexual violence, and response of staff within organisations, experienced by a range of victims. These include significant fears for family members in their home countries, fear and lack of trust in British authority figures, including police and social workers, because of negative experiences within home countries and fears of the impact of disclosing abuse on children's safeguarding and asylum status. Additional barriers are experienced by those with economic hardship and no recourse to public funds or where right to remain has been denied. There was acknowledgement from many organisations that there is a real need for more expertise around legal processes and rights of asylum seekers.

Commissioning

It was felt that historical commissioning processes, especially in relation to funding or procurement for provision for ethnically diverse communities does not adequately reflect the needs of a diverse range of minoritised communities. Where both mainstream and 'by and for' organisations have been funded by commissioners there is a frustration in some ethnic community groups, including those that offer specialist services, that the funded services either signpost into non funded organisations without recognising costs, or do not refer at all where a more specialist or culturally appropriate service can provide greater understanding and support to victims. It is acknowledged that there is growing and dynamic diversity within the population demographic of Cleveland and as such there is need of service provision that is more flexible and responsive to these changes.

Positives identified from current provision

- Embedded EDI policies (including considerations of ethnically diverse communities) across infrastructure and service provision.
- Positive action approach to minority representation within organisational governance and infrastructure
- Robust needs assessment practice
- Responsivity to culturally specific needs and faith requirements

- Language and interpretation services considered and mostly provided
- Strong partnership arrangements between mainstream providers and 'by and for' services
- Training and workforce development includes; EDI focus including needs of ethnically diverse communities
- Mainstream services acknowledge there are likely to be aspects of unconscious bias, blind spots, gaps in own knowledge, role of and need for support from services or personnel from ethnically diverse communities to ensure minoritized victims are appropriately supported including through ongoing training and development, partnership arrangements and consultation with ethnically diverse individuals/communities including user voice
- Mainstream services attempt to ensure representation of ethnic diversity within user voice forums within service planning, design and practice
- Ethnically diverse specific services acknowledge that some minoritised victims prefer mainstream service provision and some prefer 'by and for' specific services, and that choice is paramount

Challenges identified from current provision

- Despite positive action policy, actual representation of ethnically diverse personnel/staff within boards, workforce and volunteering remains missing or low
- Low or missing representative personnel/staff from ethnically diverse communities in mainstream organisations means EDI assessments and adequacy of response is managed through the lens of predominantly white individuals and workforce (un/conscious bias)
- Representation of service-users voice from ethnically diverse communities within user forums is inconsistent
- Limitations in access to, and choice re language and interpretation services
- Workforce development and support to enhance cultural competency from ethnically diverse services is reliant on good will of services and continuing healthy partnership arrangements and effective collaboration, and is not currently funded
- Current 'by and for' provision may not adequately reflect diversity within ethnically diverse populations

Risks and Mitigations

Mitigation – Actions		
What can be done to mitigate/minimise negative impacts?		
Action	Action Owner	Action Status
<p>Cleveland PCC has a priority around VAWG within the Police and Crime Plan. This includes actions around improving partnership working, ensuring improved and effective victim support and ensuring improved victim satisfaction- OPCC will ensure ongoing review of specific needs of victims from ethnically diverse communities and access to culturally competent provision is included in the PCP action plan and is regularly reviewed within the PCP delivery group tracking priorities.</p>	<p>Assistant Chief Executive, Commissioners Officer for Victims</p>	
<p>OPCC is in the process of introducing a quality schedule across all commissioned services this includes gaining a greater understanding of services cultural competencies and capability and seeks to understand what services have done on a quarterly basis to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor who is accessing services (by protected characteristic) • Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered 	<p>Assistant Chief Executive, Commissioners Officer for Victims</p>	<p>Quality Schedule is current being trialled as part of the ISVA service contract. It is proposed this be rolled out to wider commissioned services as soon as practicable</p>

<p>by people due to their protected characteristics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people, and • Encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low. <p>This will enable the OPCC to have a greater understanding of accessibility of service provision and seek opportunities to continuously drive improvement</p> <p>Cleveland OPCC will ensure positive action around recruitment within commissioned specialist DA services is built into service specifications for future commissioning and where services cannot recruit appropriately to consider how services can access specific support for victims from ethnically diverse communities as required. This would ensure that specialist services could offer (and provide where requested) an ethnically representative worker to support victims alongside non representative staff within specialist services</p>	<p>Assistant Chief Executive, Commissioners Officer for Victims</p>	
<p>Consider how a broad range of ethnically diverse</p>	<p>Commissioners Officer for Victims / Commissioners</p>	

<p>victims' needs could be met through working in partnership with Voluntary Development Agencies across Cleveland to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more independent ongoing assessment of needs within ethnically diverse communities by working with community development workers to increase engagement and consultation with ethnically diverse communities • Map the range of voluntary sector organisations and grass roots community groups supporting ethnically diverse communities and understand different levels of support appropriate to victims needs • Explore development of a small grants fund available to a more ethnically diverse range of organisations and groups and potential for VDAs to manage this on behalf of the OPCC ensuring quality, accountability and needs of minoritised victims are met 	<p>Officer for Consultation and Engagement</p>	
<p>Work with victim services to improve the diversity data collected by services</p>	<p>Commissioners Officer for Victims</p>	

Actions and Recommendations

OPCC to consider:

- Utilising information gathered thus far, to seek to provide an increased offer of support to a range of victims from ethnically diverse communities for a period of up to 12 months until the recommendations below can be implemented and reviewed. This will include discussing how a more diverse range of voluntary and community sector organisations could be grant funded to support specific communities of interest. Consideration will be given to the feasibility of the VDAs across Cleveland managing these grants, monitor quality and accountability and contribute to ongoing needs assessment and review within context of ethnically diverse communities
- Conducting further research to understand ethnically diverse communities within Cleveland
- Mapping current specific provision for ethnically diverse communities and conduct a gap analysis exercise
- Conduct a deep dive of community services for minoritised communities to increase understanding of what support is available at different stages of the recovery journey and to identify where specialist victim provision is available beyond commissioned services
- Working with services that support migrants to understand specific barriers, including the impact on those without recourse to public funds
- Further engagement with victims/service-users from ethnically diverse communities across mainstream and 'by and for' services in order to assess impact of current provision on the support and recovery journey of victims
- Review partnership arrangements between mainstream and 'by and for' services to better understand quality of collaboration and impact on victim's choice and support needs, and explore feasibility of how mainstream services can access victim support provision for ethnically diverse communities in response to victims preference for a representative worker to work alongside a specialist provider

Footnote:

1. There are various definitions of what cultural competency is. The US National Centre for Cultural Competence defines it as an ongoing learning and development process that requires organisations and individuals within them to:

1. Value diversity
2. Conduct self-assessment of attitudes, skills and knowledge
3. Manage the dynamics of difference

4. Acquire, deploy and mainstream cultural knowledge
5. Adapt to diversity and cultural contexts of the communities they serve.

2. EIA updated 21st February 2022 to reflect change in use of language from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) to ethnically diverse in the interests of inclusivity across all ethnically minoritised communities and populations.